

Remarks to the Law Enforcement Community in Newark, New Jersey September 30, 1992

The President. Thank you all so very much. I mean, this is a tremendous event. I just can't tell you how much I appreciate the support of these men and women standing here. It transcends me personally. I think the fact is that this country must strongly support our law enforcement people. And I am grateful for this endorsement.

Let me just say that all of these organizations are important, the endorsement of the members of the New Jersey law enforcement community: the New Jersey Fraternal Order of Police; the Newark Policemen's Benevolent Association; New Jersey State Fraternal Association representatives that are here; representatives of the New Jersey Sheriffs Association and groups from Newark to Nutley, Glen Ridge, East Orange, Bloomfield, Belleville, Verona, Port Authority, Essex County; police, jails and prosecutors office; Union County and Montclair to the Morris County sheriff's office. And that's a fine endorsement, I'll tell you. I treasure them all and the support of these individuals.

I think we would all agree that keeping America's neighborhoods safe and secure is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of government. It takes a tough, no-nonsense approach, one that puts our sympathy with the victims of crime, not with the criminals. After all, hard time is what criminals should get, not the innocent kids and older Americans who have to live in fear of violence. In this election, the candidates both are talking tough on crime, but just one is taking action. All I'm going to ask the American people to do between now and November is to look at the record.

Arkansas ranks near the bottom in every important per capita law enforcement expenditures: for prisons, 46th; judicial and legal systems, 50th; and when it comes to spending for police officers, Arkansas ranks 49th. Since 1989, my administration has proposed a 59-percent increase in Federal spending to fight crime.

Here is another snapshot of the situation

in Arkansas: Last year under Governor Clinton, Arkansas' criminals on average served just one-fifth of their sentence before they were back on the street. They did the crime, and they serve one-fifth of the time. That is not right. That's not protection for every family in this country. The Federal situation, the area under my control: Inmates who fall under my jurisdiction serve an average of 85 percent of their full sentence. And I'm not too happy of that; I would like to see it 100 in most of those cases.

But anyway, crime is one more issue where the Governor of Arkansas can't talk his way past his record. If you want to know who's really tough on crime, take a look at the people that are out there risking their lives for you and me every single day of their lives. Take a look at the people on the front lines. Take the Fraternal Order of Police down in Little Rock, for example. They lived with Bill Clinton for 12 years, and they know his record best. And they have endorsed George Bush for President of the United States.

Let me remind some of these officers of something some of them know and then might be new to some others. For 4 years I've kept a badge, a police badge, and I brought it along with me. I keep this in the desk in the Oval Office. I'm sure you've seen pictures of the President's desk on the television. This is number 14072 of the New York police force, city of New York. And I was given this by Police Lieutenant Matt Byrne. He gave it to me. It's the badge that his son Eddie wore the day he was gunned down by a gang of crackheads. And as Matt asked, I have kept that badge as a reminder of all the brave police officers who put their lives, put your lives, on the line for us every single day.

And yes, I'm grateful for this endorsement, these many endorsements, but it transcends that. You have my thanks for your service to your country. You have my

support. You're on the side of the law, and I am on your side. With your strong support, I am absolutely convinced that we can make dramatic progress, more progress turning back the threat of drugs and crime, making our communities more safe and more secure. We talk of strengthening family. One way to strengthen family is give the families neighborhoods that are free of these criminals. That's what these people with me here today do every single day

of their lives. And I am very, very grateful, grateful for this vote of confidence.

May God bless the men who wear the badge and the women who wear the badge and serve our great country. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Note: The President spoke at 5:42 p.m. at Newark International Airport.

Remarks to Construction Workers in Newark

September 30, 1992

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you guys. What a great welcome. This Richie—I'm glad to have been running against Clinton instead of this guy, I'll tell you. Richie Tisiere, thanks a lot. And may I salute also, as Rich did, appropriately in my view, our great Governor Tom Kean. We miss him, and hope—[*applause*]

I'm glad to be here with my new favorite number, 472. Thank you all very much. You know, as Tom said, Richie's a passionate advocate of the rights of working men and women and creating jobs. His reputation extends far beyond the borders of New Jersey. It's an honor to accept his invitation to join you here today. I've just invited him to come and be my guest at the Oval Office, and we're going to talk over some of the problems you guys face.

Now I know the work you do every day is rewarding, but it can also be back breaking in many cases here, even dangerous. I know that last Friday along the turnpike you were reminded of just how dangerous your work can sometimes be. And so before I go into a few remarks on the political situation, let me just say that Barbara and I were talking about this and that our hearts go out to the friends and families of the three who were involved in Friday's tragic accident. True working heroes, and our prayers are with all of you who call them friends.

Look, this afternoon I came to speak candidly at what's at stake in our election next month. And boy, did you give me a good, warm welcome walking into this place. I'll tell you, it's good for the soul. And it's been a good day.

I just came here after being endorsed by most of the law enforcement people in the State. I'm proud to have their endorsement because, I think we would all agree, we'd better stand with the law enforcement community against the criminal element and strengthen our neighborhoods. And they supported me, and I'm glad to have their support.

Right this minute, Governor Kean tells me that my opponent is over at his university. He got out of there fast. And so I figured that I'd take my case to the working people in New Jersey. I want to say as long as Governor Clinton is this nearby, I hope he accepts my challenge for four head-on-head debates. Let's get it on. Let's get it on, stand up there with him.

I've got plenty of questions to ask of him, and they relate to a lot of things that this crowd here cares about. So, I hope that they agree and sit down and get this format settled. I agreed to do two of the debates his way and ask only that they be done, two, the way that's been done under the last four Presidents and last four challengers. It seems to me that's fair enough. But he's been talking awful brave, sending these chickens around. Let's see him show up for